

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in South and Central Asia

KEYNOTE

Anthony Koliha

Director, Office of Global Educational Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Anthony Koliha is the Director of the Office of Global Educational Programs at the U.S. Department of State, where he oversees a portfolio of international teacher, professional, and global mobility programs and services across four branches. Prior to joining ECA, he was the Director of International Programs in the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he helped successfully launch a new School of Global and International Studies, in addition to expanding international programs and providing senior leadership for over a dozen federally-funded international, area studies, and foreign language centers. Mr. Koliha previously held joint posts as Director of the Fulbright Program in Russia and International Director of the Russia/Eurasia office for the Institute of International Education. Mr. Koliha has also worked at the Social Science Research Council and American Councils for International Education. He holds degrees from Kenyon College and Indiana University, Bloomington.

Kerri Hannan

Director, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Kerri Hannan is a public diplomacy-coned career member of the Senior Foreign Service, who joined the Department in 2001. She is currently the Director of the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. Prior to this appointment she served as Chargé d'affaires and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Luxembourg and Senior Advisor in the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources (R/PPR) for the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Her various overseas assignments include a consular tour in Bolivia, public diplomacy tours in Argentina and India, and as Spokesperson at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. In Washington she has served as the Director of English Language Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the Balkans, as a Watch Officer in the State Department Operations Center and Staff Assistant in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Kerri was born and raised in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and earned a B.S. in Zoology and M.A. in Tropical Conservation and Development specialized in Latin America from the University of Florida. She has received several State Department awards and honors and was the State Department's 2015-2016 International Women's Forum Fellow and an International Career Advancement Program Participant in 2008. She speaks Spanish, French, Dari and Portuguese.



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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN INDIA

Susan Ross

Public Diplomacy Officer, India, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Susan Ross has served in Suriname, Chile, Malta, Pakistan, and Micronesia, working in Public Affairs and Consular Affairs. Most recently she was Regional Public Affairs Officer in Kolonia, Federated States of Micronesia. Before joining the Foreign Service, Dr. Ross was a professor of communication theory at Hamilton College, in New York. She has had two Fulbright grants, one as a student in Germany and one as a Lecturer in Pune, India.

Sandhya Gupta

Consular Officer, U.S. Embassy in New Delhi

Sandhya Gupta is a consular officer with the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. She is on her first tour with the U.S. Department of State. The child of Indian immigrants to the United States, Sandhya grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. Before joining the Foreign Service, she was a civil-rights lawyer in Cleveland for nearly 10 years. Before that, she practiced environmental law in New York City and clerked for a federal judge. She holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton University, where she studied public and international affairs, and a law degree from Columbia Law School. Sandhya also previously served as a U.S. Fulbright scholar to India. She is passionate about human rights, democracy, sustainability, and equity/inclusion, as well as music and dance.

Alexi LeFevre

Political Officer, U.S. Embassy in New Delhi

Alexi LeFevre is a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India where he has served since 2018. He focuses on the domestic politics of India, Jammu and Kashmir, religious freedom, and human rights. He previously served in offices in Washington, D.C. working on Nepal, Bhutan, and India. His other overseas assignment was at the U.S. Consulate in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He holds a B.A. in International Affairs from The George Washington University and an M.A. in Global Policy from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.



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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN INDIA

Anthony Miranda

Cultural and Educational Affairs Counselor, U.S. Embassy in New Delhi

Anthony is the countrywide cultural and educational affairs counselor at the U.S. Mission to India. Previously, he served as the public affairs counselor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, where he led efforts to communicate how U.S. engagement at the UN keeps Americans safe and the United States prosperous.

Overseas, he has served as the head of public affairs at the U.S. Consulate General in Munich, Germany; the director of public-diplomacy field programs at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan; the cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria; and as a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, Spain.

In Washington, Anthony has served as the digital media advisor and acting spokesperson for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, as a special assistant in the Executive Secretariat advancing the Secretary of State's overseas travel, as a staff assistant in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and as a watchstander in the State Department's 24-hour intelligence operations center.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Anthony practiced law at Hogan Lovells LLP in Washington, DC. He has a B.A. in English from the University of Washington and a J.D. cum laude from Boston University. A first-generation American, Anthony hails from Miami, Florida.





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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

Sanda Chao

Senior Bureau Planner, Office of Security and Transnational Affairs, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Sanda Chao started her civil service career at State with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in 2007. She has completed three short-term temporary duty assignments as Acting Public Affairs Officer in Vientiane, Laos (2010), Asia Program Officer in Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (2016), and as a Country Coordinator in the Bureau of Foreign Assistance Resources (2019). Sanda joined the Bureau of African Affairs in 2018 and the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in 2020 working on strategic planning and the foreign assistance budget.

She holds a BA from the University of Maryland, College Park and a M.Sc from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. Sanda was born in Burma, and her family immigrated to the United States when she was four years old. After college, she spent two years in Japan on the Japan Exchange Teaching Program. She lives in Arlington with her husband and two daughters.

Heather Thorton

Assistant Social Media Coordinator, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

As a Rangel fellow, Heather joins the office with experience as a former Foreign Service Officer trained in public diplomacy. Additionally, she has a master's degree in International Politics from American University. Heather looks forward to using her communications skills to support SCA's digital engagement efforts as the Assistant Social Media Coordinator.

Laura A. Tedesco

Cultural Heritage Program Manager, Office of Press and Public Diplomacy, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Laura A. Tedesco serves as the Cultural Heritage Program Manager for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. Laura's work is centered on supporting U.S. Embassies across the region in identifying and guiding cultural preservation projects supported by the Department of State. In 2021 there are more than 30 active projects that preserve intangible and built heritage of more than 12 nations. Now based in Washington, D.C., she previously worked in Afghanistan at the U.S. Embassy from 2010-2012 developing and overseeing the State Department's large-scale initiatives to support the preservation of Afghanistan's cultural patrimony. Prior to joining the Department of State, Laura worked at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for 13 years. She has also worked in the private sector field of cultural resources management, managing archaeological recovery of cultural resources for land development and corporate investment programs. She has participated in archaeological excavations in Syria, Palestine, the Republics of Armenia and Georgia, Italy, Cyprus, and in several locations across the United States. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from New York University.

